Progressivism was when people saw corruption or problems in America and wanted to change it. One group of people who helped change America were called Muckrakers. Muckrakers wrote about the problems they saw so everyone knew about them. This allowed people who could change the problems, such as government officials, to know them so they could make the needed changes.

In 1904 socialist writer **Upton Sinclair**’s two-month visit to Chicago’s “Packingtown” area provided him with a wealth of material that he turned into his best-selling novel, *The Jungle*. The book is best known for revealing the unsanitary process by which animals became meat products. Yet Sinclair’s primary concern was not with the goods that were produced, but with the workers who produced them. Throughout the book he described with great accuracy the horrifying physical conditions under which immigrant packing plant workers and their families worked and lived. Sinclair’s graphic descriptions of how meat products were manufactured were an important factor in the subsequent passage of the federal Pure Food and Drug and Meat Inspection Act in 1906. Sinclair later commented about the effect of his novel: "I aimed at the public’s heart and by accident hit its stomach."

Excerpt from Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle*:

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| Let a man so much as scrape his finger pushing a truck in the pickle-rooms, and he might have a sore that would put him out of the world; all the joints in his fingers might be eaten by the acid, one by one.  Of the butchers and floorsmen, the beef-boners and trimmers, and all those who used knives, you could scarcely find a person who had the use of his thumb; time and time again the base of it had been slashed, till it was a mere lump of flesh against which the man pressed the knife to hold it. The hands of these men would be criss-crossed with cuts, until you could no longer pretend to count them or to trace them. They would have no nails,—they had worn them off pulling hides; their knuckles were swollen so that their fingers spread out like a fan.  …There were the beef-luggers, who carried two-hundred-pound quarters into the refrigerator-cars; a fearful kind of work, that began at four o’clock in the morning, and that wore out the most powerful  …There were the woolpluckers, whose hands went to pieces even sooner than the hands of the pickle-men; for the pelts of the sheep had to be painted with acid to loosen the wool, and then the pluckers had to pull out this wool with their bare hands, till the acid had eaten their fingers off.  …Some worked at the stamping-machines, and it was very seldom that one could work long there at the pace that was set, and not give out and forget himself, and have a part of his hand chopped off.  There were the “hoisters,” as they were called, whose task it was to press the lever which lifted the dead cattle off the floor. They ran along upon a rafter, peering down through the damp and the steam; and as old Durham’s architects had not built the killing-room for the convenience of the hoisters, at every few feet they would have to stoop under a beam, say four feet above the one they ran on; which got them into the habit of stooping, so that in a few years they would be walking like chimpanzees.  …and as for the other men, who worked in tank-rooms full of steam, and in some of which there were open vats near the level of the floor, their peculiar trouble was that they fell into the vats; and when they were fished out, there was never enough of them left to be worth exhibiting,—sometimes they would be overlooked for days, till all but the bones of them had gone out to the world as Durham’s Pure Leaf Lard! | Explain 3 of the things that happened to people who worked in specific jobs at the meat-packing plant.  Would you like to work here? Why or why not? |
| … There was never the least attention paid to what was cut up for sausage; there would come all the way back from Europe old sausage that had been rejected, and that was moldy and white – it would be dosed with borax and glycerin, and dumped into the hoppers, and made over again for home consumption. There would be meat that had tumbled out on the floor, in the dirt and sawdust, where the workers had tramped and spit uncounted billions of consumption germs. There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms; and the water from leaky roofs would drip over it, and thousands of rats would race about on it. It was too dark in these storage places to see well, but a man could run his hand over these piles of meat and sweep off handfuls of the dried dung of rats. These rats were nuisances, and the packers would put poisoned bread out for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together. This is no fairy story and no joke; the meat would be shoveled into carts, and the man who did the shoveling would not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one – there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit. There was no place for the men to wash their hands before they ate their dinner, and so they made a practice of washing them in the water that was to be ladled into the sausage. …All of their sausage came out of the same bowl, but when they came to wrap it they would stamp some of it "special," and for this they would charge two cents more a pound. | Would you eat this meat if you knew what happened to it? Why or why not? (Use examples from the text to explain) |

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*How the Other Half Lives* is work of photojournalism by **Jacob Riis** focused on the lives of the poor in the Lower East Side in New York City, and greatly influenced "muckraking" journalism. Riis mostly said the poor’s worst problems was the places they lived, but he also divided the poor into two categories: deserving of assistance (mostly women and children) and undeserving (mostly the unemployed and intractably criminal). He wrote with prejudice about Jews, Italians, and Irish, and he never asked for government intervention. Still, the motivation of his work was a true sympathy for his subjects, and his work shocked many New Yorkers.

Excerpt from *How the Other Half Lives*:

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| …After a night spent at Police Headquarters [the abandoned baby] travels up to the Infants' Hospital on Randall's Island in the morning, fitted out with a number and a bottle, … Few outcast babies survive their desertion long. Murder is the true name of the mother's crime in eight cases out of ten. …The stormier the night, the more certain is the police nursery to echo with the feeble cries of abandoned babes. Often they come half dead from exposure. One live baby came in a little pine coffin which a policeman found an inhuman wretch trying to bury in an up-town lot. But many do not live to be officially registered as a charge upon the county. Seventy-two dead babies were picked up in the streets last year. … | What is the problem Jacob Riis has identified here? |
| Oftener no ray of light penetrates the gloom, and no effort is made to probe the mystery of sin and sorrow. This also is the policy pursued in the great Foundling Asylum of the Sisters of Charity in Sixty-eighth Street, known all over the world as Sister Irene’s Asylum. Years ago the crib than now stands just inside the street door, under the great main portal, was placed outside at night, but it filled up too rapidly. The babies took to coming in little squads instead of in single file, and in self-defense the sisters were forced to take the cradle. In.  Now the mother must bring her child inside and put it in the crib where she is seen by the sister on guard. No effort is made to question her, or discover the child's antecedents, but she is asked to stay and nurse her own and another baby. If she refuses, she is allowed to depart unhindered. If willing, she enters at once into the great family of the good Sister who in twenty-one years has gathered as many thousand homeless babies into her fold. One was brought in when I was last in the asylum, in the middle of July, that received in its crib the number 20715. The death-rate is of course lowered a good deal where exposure of the child is prevented… | What does a mother have to do to leave her baby at Sister Irene’s Asylum? |
| Four hundred and sixty mothers, who could not or would not keep their own babies, did voluntary penance for their sin in the asylum last year by nursing a strange waif besides their own until both should be strong enough to take their chances in life's battle. An even larger number than the eleven hundred were "pay babies," put out to be nursed by "mothers" outside the asylum. The money thus earned pays the rent of hundreds of poor families. … The procession of these nurse-mothers, when they come to the asylum on the first Wednesday of each month to receive their pay and have the babies inspected by the sisters, is one of the sights of the city. The nurses, who are under strict supervision, grow to love their little charges and part from them with tears when, at the age of four or five, they are sent to Western homes to be adopted. The sisters carefully encourage the home-feeling in the child as their strongest ally in seeking its mental and moral elevation, and the toddlers depart happy to join their "papas and mammas" in the far-away, unknown home. | How are all the babies at Sister Irene’s Asylum fed and raised? |
| An infinitely more fiendish… plan of child-murder than desertion has flourished in New York for years under the title of baby-farming. The name, put into plain English, means starving babies to death. The law has fought this most heinous of crimes by compelling the registry of all baby-farms. As well might it require all persons intending murder to register their purpose with time and place of the deed under the penalty of exemplary fines. …. "Baby-farms," said once Mr. Elbridge T. Gerry, the President of the Society charged with the execution of the law that was passed through his efforts, "are concerns by means of which persons, usually of disreputable character, eke out a living by taking two, or three, or four babies to board. They are the charges of outcasts, or illegitimate children. They feed them on sour milk, and give them paregoric to keep them quiet, until they die, when they get some young medical man without experience to sign a certificate to the Board of Health that the child died of inanition, and so the matter ends. The baby is dead, and there is no one to complain." …The society has among its records a very recent case of a baby a week old (Baby "Blue Eyes") that was offered for sale--adoption, the dealer called it--in a newspaper. The agent bought it after some haggling for a dollar, and arrested the woman slave-trader; but the law was powerless to punish her for her crime. Twelve unfortunate women awaiting dishonored motherhood were found in her house. | What is a “baby-farm”? |

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**Nellie Bly** was the pen name of American female journalist Elizabeth Jane Cochran. She remains famous today for an exposé in which she faked insanity to study a mental institution from within, entitled *Ten Days in a Mad-House*. After a night of practicing deranged expressions in front of a mirror, she checked into a working-class boardinghouse. She refused to go to bed, telling the boarders that she was afraid of them and that they looked crazy. They soon decided that *she* was crazy, and the next morning summoned the police. Taken to a courtroom, she pretended to have amnesia. The judge concluded she had been drugged. She was then examined by several doctors, who all declared her to be insane. "Positively demented," said one, "I consider it a hopeless case. She needs to be put where someone will take care of her.” After ten days, Bly was released from the asylum at the request of the newspaper she worked for. Her report caused a sensation and brought her lasting fame. While embarrassed physicians and staff fumbled to explain how so many professionals had been fooled, a grand jury launched its own investigation into conditions at the asylum, inviting Bly to assist. The jury's report recommended the changes she had proposed, and its call for increased funds for care of the insane prompted an $850,000 increase in the budget of the Department of Public Charities and Corrections. They also made sure that all of the examinations were more thorough so that only people who were actually insane went to the asylum.

Excerpt from *Ten Days in a Mad-House*:

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| The eating was one of the most horrible things. …there was no salt for the food. The hungry and even famishing women made an attempt to eat the horrible messes. Mustard and vinegar were put on meat and in soup to give it a taste, but it only helped to make it worse. Even that was all consumed after two days, and the patients had to try to choke down fresh fish, just boiled in water, without salt, pepper or butter…The most insane refused to swallow the food and were threatened with punishment. In our short walks we passed the kitchen where food was prepared for the nurses and doctors. There we got glimpses of melons and grapes and all kinds of fruits, beautiful white bread and nice meats, and the hungry feeling would be increased tenfold.  People in the world can never imagine the length of days to those in asylums. They seemed never ending, and we welcomed any event that might give us something to think about as well as talk of. There is nothing to read, and the only bit of talk that never wears out is conjuring up delicate food that they will get as soon as they get out. Anxiously the hour was watched for when the boat arrived to see if there were any new unfortunates to be added to our ranks. When they came and were ushered into the sitting-room the patients would express sympathy to one another for them and were anxious to show them little marks of attention. | What does this say about how the patients on Blackwell Island were provided for? |
| …[Mrs. Cotter told the following story to Nellie Bly] ”The remembrance of that is enough to make me mad. For crying the nurses beat me with a broom-handle and jumped on me, injuring me internally, so that I shall never get over it. Then they tied my hands and feet, and, throwing a sheet over my head, twisted it tightly around my throat, so I could not scream, and thus put me in a bathtub filled with cold water. They held me under until I gave up every hope and became senseless. At other times they took hold of my ears and beat my head on the floor and against the wall. Then they pulled out my hair by the roots, so that it will never grow in again.” Mrs. Cotter here showed me proofs of her story, the dent in the back of her head and the bare spots where the hair had been taken out by the handful.  …While I was there a pretty young girl was brought in. She had been sick, and she fought against being put in that dirty place. One night the nurses took her and, after beating her, they held her naked in a cold bath, then they threw her on her bed. When morning came the girl was dead. The doctors said she died of convulsions, and that was all that was done about it.  …They inject so much morphine and chloral that the patients are made crazy. I have seen the patients wild for water from the effect of the drugs, and the nurses would refuse it to them. I have heard women beg for a whole night for one drop and it was not given them. | How were patients on Blackwell Island treated? |